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ABSTRACT

The policies and actions of the Norfolk City Public Schools are having a devastating effect on black students. The system's suspension and suggested expulsion notice data and employment record are objective indicators that the system was not designed to educate black children. Black students are suspended nearly twice as often as white children and they receive almost five times as many expulsion notices. A study by the Children's Defense Fund supports the position that most school suspension policies do not serve the interests of children or of schools. The United States District Court decision on Mills v the Board of Education of the District of Columbia sets a precedent for possible court action dealing with these policies. The Norfolk Public Schools Employment Report shows that personnel policy has been discriminatory and has adversely affected desegregation efforts. School policy must be systematically changed in order to improve the situation of black children. (Author/MK)

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THE PEDAGOGICAL OPPRESSION OF BLACK STUDENTS IN NORFOLK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS-MYTH OR PRACTICE?

An indepth study of the "UNDERDEVELOPMENT OF BLACK HUMAN POTENTIAL" in Norfolk City Public Schools appears to be a necessary undertaking if the "plight" of Black students is going to be supported by their exercising their "rights" of "quality" public school education.

It is beyond the scope of this report to give an analysis at this time of the concomitant problems that Black students are beset with daily as they make attempts to learn in a school system that sees them as "disadvantaged" and "deprived."

This report purports to reflect objectively on the (1) Norfolk Public School Suspension and Suggested Expulsion Notices Data, (2) Employment Report, (3) and to bring forth several possible conclusions on the data cited to hopefully excite and incite a sense of urgency in the reader that the time is NOW to come to the DEFENSE of Black children in Norfolk City Public schools.

The use of suspension and suggested expulsion notices in Norfolk Public schools has reached staggering proportions according to an analysis of the data shown below and Black children bear the brunt of suspensions; they are suspended at nearly TWICE the rate of white students; they receive suggested expulsion notes at nearly FIVE times the rate of white students.

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I. NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS - DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES - TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS SUSPENDED BY GRADE LEVEL AND RACE SEPTEMBER 3, 1974 THROUGH JUNE 13, 1975.

GRADE LEVEL	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	BLACK	WHITE
Senior High	10,380	1,331	850
Junior High	11,277	2,374	1,147
Elementary	26,331	430	130
TOTAL	47,988	4,135	2,127

NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS - DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES TABLE 3, TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS RECEIVING SUGGESTED EXPULSION NOTICES BY GRADE LEVEL AND RACE FROM SEPTEMBER 3, 1974 THROUGH JUNE 13, 1975.

GRADE LEVEL	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	BLACK	WHITE
Senior High	10,380	52	8
Junior High	11,277	47	14
Elementary	26,331	1	-
TOTAL	47,988	100	22

The CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND of the Washington Research Project, Inc., conducted an analysis of data submitted to HEW's office for Civil Rights on Public School Suspensions during the 1972-73 school year.

The study of school suspensions led the Children's Defense Fund to the following broad findings and conclusions:

(1) The vast majority of suspensions are for nonviolent offenses. CDF's survey found that 63.4 percent of the suspensions were for nondangerous offenses; 24.5 percent were for truancy and tardiness. In some districts, the figures were worse. In a Portland, Maine senior high school, over 85 percent of the suspensions during the 1973-74 school year were for truancy and tardiness. In three junior high schools the figure was 67 percent. By contrast, CDF's survey found that less than three percent of suspensions were for destruction of property, the use of drugs or alcohol, or other criminal activity.

(2) Suspensions are often imposed arbitrarily, without affording the student an opportunity to explain, or without giving his or her parents an opportunity to be contacted. Only 3.4 percent of the children in CDF's survey had any hearing.

(3) There is extraordinary variation in the length of suspensions and in the numbers and kinds of suspendable offenses among school districts and even among schools in a single district. Children's chances of being suspended, therefore, depend on which district, which school, and which class they have the luck to land in. For example, 13-year-old Sheila was suspended from her newly desegregated school for refusing to remove a headscarf which she was permitted to wear the previous year in her all black school.

(4) Too few school districts have or disseminate to administrators, teachers, students, and parents, clear, written and consistent rules of conduct. As a result, what children can be suspended for is defined and carried out by individual administrators and teachers. For example, one child was suspended for "arrogant defiance to authority, not verbal but by look."

(5) Most suspensions do not serve any demonstrated valid interests of children or schools. Instead, they harm the children involved and jeopardize their prospects for securing a decent education. Suspensions push children and their problems onto the street, thereby causing more problems for them and for the rest of us. They have become a crutch enabling school people to avoid tougher issues of ineffective

and inflexible school programs; poor communications with students, parents, and community; and a lack of understanding about and commitment to serving children from many different backgrounds and with many different needs in our public schools.

The writer agrees wholeheartedly with Children's Defense Fund's position that Suspensions should be ended except in a small minority of cases where harm to persons or "property" is immediate and serious. Also, as an urgent goal to eliminate its arbitrary application against Black and other minority children. At the very minimum, school officials must adopt and enforce fair procedures which respect the rights of parents and children.

The following case represents the gravity of the problem and fortunately for the Plaintiffs the judgement reflects a growing concern for the civil and constitutional rights of children and their parents in the public school system in general and the District of Columbia in particular.

Peter MILLS et al., Plaintiffs, v.
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA et.al, Defendants
Civ.A. No. 1939-71 US District Court, District of Columbia
August 1, 1972

Action brought on behalf of seven children of school age by their next friends for declaration of rights and for injunction restraining Board of Education of District of Columbia, and others from excluding children from District of Columbia Public schools or denying them publicly supported education. The District Court Waddy, J., held that District of Columbia Board of Education by failing to provide the children who had been labeled as behavioral problems, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed or hyperactive, and the class they represented with publicly supported specialized education violated controlling statutes and Board's own regulations and denied due process.

Judgment accordingly.

THE NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYMENT REPORT BY SCHOOLS, September 3, 1974 through June 13, 1975 shows that:

(1) BLACK TEACHERS are in the minority or outnumbered by White teachers in all but 10 of the 67 schools in the city,

(2) are not in the MAJORITY or outnumber whites in any of the schools even though many of the schools have a majority black student population,

(3) Black teachers have the same (not equal) representation at the following schools: Bowling Park, Chesterfield, Diggs Park, Lansdale, Liberty Park, Stuart, Tucker, West, Willoughby and Young Park Schools.

From this data it is clear that in the schools where Black teachers have the "same" numbers of white teachers, the majority of these schools are in all, if not, predominantly Black neighborhoods and the student population of these schools overwhelmingly have a majority of Black student enrollment.

II. NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYMENT REPORT BY BUDGET ACCOUNTS, October 1, 1975 (The budget account numbers are omitted):

	BLACK	WHITE
Superintendent	—	1
Deputy Supt/Asst. Supts.	—	3
Administrators	2	25
Stenos and Clerks (admin.)	4	43
Instructional Supervision	14	29
Principals	45	66
Teachers - Day Schools	872	1438½
VISITING TCHRS./SOCIAL WORK TECH.	15	11
Adult Education	1	5
SPECIAL EDUCATION	80	67
Teachers - Cerebral Palsy Center	—	3
Vocational Distributive Education	—	1
Vocational Health Occupations	4	14
Vocational Shipyard	—	2

PIANISTS	3	2
School Secretaries	48	98
Stenos and Clerks (Instr. Super.)**	13	48
PARAPROFESSIONALS	55	18
Printer	--	1
Physicians	--	2
Therapists	--	3
Clerical (attendance and Health)	--	2
Psychologists	2	10
Child Labor Permit Clerk	--	1
AIDES AND CARRIERS (CEREBRAL PALSY CTR.)	4	--
ATTENDANCE PERSONNEL	33	5
CAFETERIA	424	96
TRANSPORTATION SERVICE HELPER	1	0
CUSTODIAL SERVICES	344	39
WAREHOUSE	10	2
TRANSPORTATION**	7	5
School Plant Facilities**	4	13
Carpenters, Painters, Helpers	5	24
Electricians	3	17
Plumbers	2	6
Supervisor of Transportation	-	1
MINI-BUS DRIVERS	18	14
TRANS. MOD. MINI-BUS DRIVERS	2	
89-10 Clerks and Stenos	--	5
89-10 Teachers	71	82
89-10 Community Workers	16	25
Basic Adult Education	1	1
Manpower	9	16
INTERN TEACHERS	4	--
89-10 Clerks and Stenos	5	10
89-10 PARAPROFESSIONALS	103	22
89-10 Nurse	-	1
89-10 Custodial	1	1

NOTES:

*Assistant Superintendents for Pupil Personnel Services and Instruction are included in the Instructional Supervision Category.

** Includes CETA

In conclusion, let's look at the following:

(1) The data on suspensions show that Black students are patently unruly, incorrigible trouble-makers who cause "violence" and "vandalism" in the schools; or the public school system in Norfolk is not designed to educate Black children.

(2) The Children's Defense Fund report gives us additional data in support of our call for an investigation into the reasons for what overtly appears to be "racism" as the prime motivator in the Norfolk Public schools.

(3) The Mills vs. Board of Education sets the precedent for possible court action in dealing with the intolerable acts of bureaucratic and individual intransigence of the Norfolk Public School personnel.

(4) The Employment Report show that the displacement and replacement of Black teachers and administrators appears to have been clearly one of the objectives of the "devastating de-segregation scheme" based on the data cited.

(5) The Employment Report also strongly suggests that the "busing issue" was used as an effective "smoke screen" to camouflage the "desegregation scheme" that was primarily designed to employ DIRECT RULE rather than continue the costly and illegal INDIRECT RULE (segregation) to insure the "undereducation" of Black children in Norfolk Public Schools.

(6) The "soft money" (Terminal Federal Funding Sources) staff that includes many blacks, will not be absorbed by local funds as this source "dries" up. The Virginian-Pilot reported on August 25, 1976, page B5 in an article titled "3 Schools to Lose Community

Workers." This appears to signal the beginning of the "Occupational Hazards" of Black non-certificated personnel in the Norfolk Public School system.

When one reads this report it is expected that the writer will be accused of being an "alarmist" among other names, but the evidence is still coming in, not only from the "daily occurring devastation" in Norfolk Public Schools, but elsewhere in this country.

My final conclusion will look at an observation made by the Nations most prominent Black psychiatrist and also a noted educator, Dr. Kenneth Clarke in the July 9, 1976 edition of Bilalian News on page 15. In an interview, Dr. Clarke stated unequivocally his opinions on the "underdevelopment of Black Human Potential." He states:

> It now appears that the present system of organization and functioning of urban schools has become the chief blockage in the mobility of the masses of Black and other lower status minority group children... public schools in our Northern urban centers are no longer the instruments and tools for upward mobility in our system but have become 'institutions breeding despair, frustration, and sowing the seeds of self destruction and social instability.
>
> ....public education for non-caucasians, their rights to equal protection under the law, and their right not to be forced to attend inferior, segregated schools do not have priority in the minds of respectable American academicians.
>
> ....public education for non-caucasians had entered a dangerous period of stagnation, if not regression in the American civil rights movement, and resistance on the part of many officials in protecting the rights of black students.